

Baltic Republics on Edge of Soviet Volcano Remain Calm

Latvia, Esthonia, Lithuania, Finland and Poland in State of Tension Over Situation With Red Troops on Border but Unable to Help Themselves, and With Many Within Favoring Bolshevism Literally Between the Devil and the Deep Sea

Below is a general view of Helsingfors, chief city of Finland, which despite its gayety lives under the Red menace. Map shows how Soviet Russia endangers the five little republics by its very proximity. Troops at the left are Finnish White Guards.

PESSIMISM as to the future predominates in the graphic pen picture of the future of the five little Baltic republics drawn by Capt. Francis McCullagh. THE NEW YORK HERALD'S correspondent, investigating the political situation in eastern Europe. Overshadowing Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Esthonia and Finland is the Red menace of Bolshevism. Not only are the borders of those places fringed by Lenin's troops, but within the countries themselves are strong Soviet sympathizers. When the volcano may break forth and overwhelm them Capt. McCullagh does not venture to say—that it may be at any moment is certain from his observations. With all the world looking for permanent peace the situation is dark indeed.

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THE present series of articles which I am writing for THE NEW YORK HERALD deal with all the new republics which have been formed out of the wreck of Russia. So far I have only written of Latvia and Lithuania, but I shall soon deal with Esthonia, Finland and Poland.

The republic in the Far East need not be considered at all, as it is only upheld by Japan and will become Bolshevik at the moment the Mikado withdraws his protecting hand. Georgia may also be left out of account, for it is completely at the mercy of the Reds; all its sister republics have disappeared, and its own downfall is expected daily. There only remain, therefore, the little States of which I have spoken, and the future of them all is enveloped in such obscurity that a study of their present condition is one of the greatest fascinations.

I am visiting every one of them for THE NEW YORK HERALD and getting the opinions of their leading men on the subject of their own future and of Russia's future. I am also collecting as many facts as possible from independent sources. To draw on independent, and even hostile, sources is necessary, for the simple reason that statesmen in office tend to be very cautious, to indulge only in generalities and very often to say nothing of the fears which beset them most. But one fear all these statesmen have in common—a fear of Bolshevism, of the stupendous Red republic, whose very shadow is blighting their nascent prosperity, and of the Bolshevism within their own borders, which is an even greater danger.

Internal Enemy Leaves Its Mark In Burned Factories and Graves

From Riga to Narva and from Narva across to Viborg this internal enemy has left its mark on all of them in the shape of burnt buildings and ruined factories and unnumbered graves. Thousands of bullets are still sticking in the shop fronts of the Riga streets, and, owing to the difficulty of importing plate glass, there are still to be seen in hundreds of shop windows the perforations made by Bolshevik bullets. Even in Helsingfors, rapidly as it has recovered, I have seen in shop windows similar telltale perforations temporarily closed by small discs of wood clamped on each side of the glass by iron rivets.

When it is remembered that the internal danger in Finland, Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania is liable to be exploded from without at any moment by an enemy who is only a few days' march from the capitals of the republics in question, it will be seen that once that these young States have every reason for despondency. They are all, in fact, on the edge of a volcano, which may without any warning belch forth its floods of red fire and lava, so that the mystery is how these new nations manage to keep up such an appearance of calm.

It is no use in saying that Lenin wants peace, for his soldiers may want war and they may disobey him, as he taught them to disobey their old officers. It is no use in saying that Russia is excessively poor and miserable; that very poverty is what makes it formidable.

Helsingfors, With All Its Gayety, Lives Under a Constant Menace

The life and activity of Helsingfors can be seen at 8 o'clock in the morning in the principal hotel of Helsingfors, as well as appointed a hotel as one could find in New York, situated on a broad and well kept esplanade, whose well stocked shop fronts blaze with electric lights—for in these high latitudes the darkness of the night has not yet gone. The bells of the swift electric cars jangle cheerfully, and the sidewalks are full of smartly dressed clerks of both sexes hastening to their work, but I know that only a few hours' distant, not as far as Buffalo is from New York city, lies the Red frontier, with its trenches and barbed wire entanglements and its hundreds of deserted summer residences, once occupied by bureaucrats and the merchant princes of Petrograd, which city, again, is only a few hours' distant from that frontier.

I have been down at Terioki and have seen that the bureaucrats and the merchant princes left their houses so hurriedly that their furniture and pictures are still there; that in some cases their overcoats and hats are still hanging in the vestibules. And between that frontier and Petrograd the Fifth Soviet army is still massed, hungry, shoeless, undisciplined. No, it is no joke at all for a small State of a couple of million inhabitants, a good many of them Red, to have as a neighbor a famished and derelict empire of 125,000,000 souls.

The people here have, I admit, got used to the danger, and the heads of the Government are taking part in the festivities of the winter season just as the members of the Lithuanian Government, when I was at Kovno a few weeks ago, were taking part in fox hunting. But for all that there is no

disguising the greatness and the proximity of the peril.

I intend in this article to give some general observations about all these border States before going into further detail about any one of them. It is a subject of fascinating interest, for, so far as the American reader is concerned, it deals with undiscovered peoples. THE NEW YORK HERALD once sent Stanley to explore darkest Africa, but there are in Europe races almost as little known to the man in Broadway as pigmies of the great equatorial forests, and their future development around the Baltic Sea

all the neighboring States there is the same tendency. The publicists, the professors, the heads of Government say to me: "We have found stability. There will be no more change here. Write to that effect to THE NEW YORK HERALD. It would be bad for our trade and our economic conditions if you said otherwise. It would scare away capital."

I must confine myself at present, however, to the problem of the Baltic, with its curious, undiscovered peoples, whose past is so obscure and whose future is wrapped in such mystery. Experts have, of course,



presents as curious and puzzling a problem as the future development of the Mediterranean peoples presented at the time of Tarquin.

The busy man in Wall Street, the ranch owner in Texas, even the school teacher in Cincinnati, have at the back of their brains a sort of idea that, though about fifteen hundred years ago the human race was boiling like the surface of the mercurial globe itself some half a million years back and no one knew with what mould the different tribes of men would harden, the world of men is now pretty well fixed and set, like the land and sea, the continents and islands, the mountain ranges and the jutting headlands.

This is an error, for though in this part of the Old World we are all nominally Christians whose wish it is to wear carefully designed clothes and patent leather boots, and to drink Haut Sauterne with our oysters and Chateau Latour with the entrees, we differ profoundly from the Americans inasmuch as we are still stirred deep down in our souls by that vague migratory instinct which produced the great Barbarian eruptions that accompanied the downfall of the Roman Empire.

No one can foretell the final outcome of the present welter, what new combinations will be formed, what new permutations will take place. In no place, not even in the Pacific nor in the Mediterranean, is there absolute permanence, but at three different points in Europe everything is in the melting pot and gigantic changes are taking place before our eyes.

That vast stretch of terrestrial surface which was once known as Russia is, in a state of liquefaction, and the Muscovite race is tossing to and fro from the White Sea to the Black, from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the frozen tundras of the Arctic to the scorching deserts of Persia; and no living man can tell when these stupendous, earth-shaking oscillations will cease and into what forms this molten mass will temporarily solidify—I say "temporarily," for nothing is permanent.

Asia I leave out of account, though its two great agglomerations of humanity are also in a state of disturbance. Seething with unrest, India, with its enormous population and its scores of different races, is on the eve of great changes, and that prodigious slice of the earth's surface which was once known as the Celestial Empire is in a state of full integration, with an armed and disciplined Japan watching it coldly, patiently, not at all disinterestedly.

In southeastern Europe the disappearance of the great Ottoman Empire has created in the Black Sea, the Aegean and the Levant a disturbance such as would be created in the material world by the submersion of a continent through volcanic agency. Who can tell what will happen in Egypt, in Syria, in Anatolia, in the Caucasus and throughout that vast Mohammedan world which has gone to pieces before our eyes? Buddhism and Islam, two of the greatest religious systems in the world, have gone under; Christianity itself is questioned; a dozen thrones have fallen in Europe, and the Ancient Order of Kings is in danger; while the whole parliamentary and capitalist system, which made possible the predominance of the European races, is being seriously attacked.

Officials Show General Tendency To Close Eyes to the Eruption

And with all that I find everywhere a general tendency on the part of officials and of elected persons to close their eyes to the active eruption of which they themselves are a part and to persuade themselves that, so far as their own particular community is concerned, a state of rest and eternal permanence has been attained. This tendency is strongest exactly in those places where the confusion is greatest and the most enormous changes certain and imminent. For the last year I have spent my time in the very heart of the uproar, and I found nobody so convinced that he had based his system of government on eternal granite as the one man whose feet are planted in the centre of this seismic disturbance—Vladimir Lenin.

He fully admits that utter chaos will break loose everywhere else, but, with the ground quivering beneath his feet, he protests that his position, at least, is safe. In

known of them all along, but it would be incorrect to say that the busy man in Broadway was until recently aware of their existence. In moments of irritation he lumped them all together as "Dutchmen." Just as he lumped together the variegated and sharply differentiated races of southern Europe as "Dagoes," and, if called upon for a more scientific definition he expressed the opinion that the Finns were Swedes, the Lithuanians Poles, the Letts Germans and the Esthonians God knows what. He was unaware of the fact that the Lithuanians are as different from the Poles and the Letts as different from the Germans as the English are different from the Italians. Poland he knew, of course, to be Slav, and about the Germans and Scandinavians he had a fairly accurate idea.

Lithuanian Tongue Among The Oldest Spoken by Man

The Letts and Lithuanians are of Indo-European stock, but speak different languages which are both far removed from the Slav and the German tongues. The Lithuanian tongue, which was nearly crushed out of existence by the combined efforts of the Poles, the Russian officials and the Lithuanian gentry, and which was only resurrected as a literary language during the last seventeen years, is one of the oldest tongues spoken by men, being mostly akin to Sanscrit.

The revival of Lettish, which is also a very ancient tongue, began at a more remote period, and the language itself is consequently in a stronger position. Polish and Finnish are in the strongest position of all and there is now no possibility of their being destroyed, but all these languages were threatened with extinction at one time or another by a succession of conquerors. The danger of extinction was always greatest when the civilization of the conqueror was of a higher standard than that of the subject race. Thus Swedish very nearly killed Finnish, just as German very nearly killed Lettish, while Polish went nearest of all to accomplishing the complete obliteration of Lithuanian.

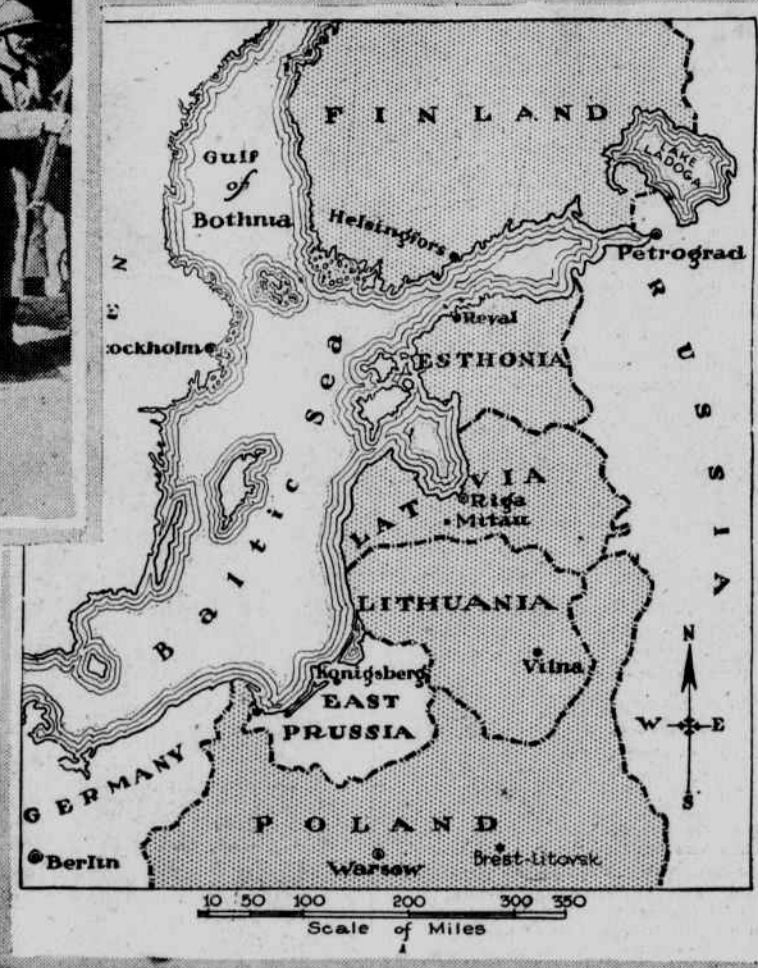
The Russian conquest really saved all the little languages and preserved all these little nations; but it deserves no credit for this any more than the Turk deserves for having failed to destroy the language and the civilization of the Serbs, Bulgarians, Rumanians, Greeks, Armenians and the other ancient peoples who had fallen under his sway.

Little Races Retain Identity By Superior Civilization

These little races in northeastern and southeastern Europe preserved their national identity because the Russian and Turk were less civilized than the western races which they conquered. On the other hand, the Poles and Lithuanians in Prussia lost in many cases their language, religion and nationality just as under the rule of highly organized conquerors the Irish lost their language, though not their religion nor their nationality. Had Ireland been conquered by Russia or Turkey its civilization would now be at a lower level than it is, but the Irish language would be flourishing. I must also add that the jealousy shown by some of the Czar's German and Swedish influence prevented the Teutonic and Swedish elements from altogether crushing Lettish and Finnish, though it introduced a new element in the shape of Russian.

In Esthonia one first comes across the Scandinavian and Finnish strains. The Esthonians are, indeed, a Finnish tribe and their language is almost the same as Finnish, the principal difference between the two being due to the fact that, while Esthonia was subject to Russian and German influence, Finland was subjected for a long time to an equally powerful Swedish influence, as is shown by the fact that many of the people in Finland speak Swedish and that Swedish as well as Finnish is spoken in the Diet at Helsingfors and that Finnish and Swedish are officially recognized as the two national languages of the Finnish Republic.

Reval was founded by the Swedes, as Riga was founded by the Germans, and the latter city was ruled at one time by the Poles and at another time by the Swedes.



These facts show how the tide of empire has ebbed and flowed in this part of the world and prepare us for further changes in the future.

In America such a condition of impermanence is difficult to recognize, but here it is a fact that has to be faced, and the very violence with which the heads of the various Baltic Governments have assured me that they will fight for their independence to the last man, and that, come what may, Russia will never be back again among them, gives one the impression that they dread in their heart of hearts the return of the Moscovites or the arrival of German "help," which, having helped, will stay on.

With the exception of Finland the new States are all wedged in between two mighty empires, both of them temporarily crippled, and they know that the critical moment in their fortunes will come when these empires have pulled themselves together again and begin to look around. They know that if a reconstituted Russia attacks them, England, France and America can give no assistance. America is out of the question, and the peoples of France and England will not stand for any more intervention. Because, in the first place, their soldiers will fight at present only in case of an attack on themselves, and in the second place because their own serious economic condition forbids any more such adventures.

To Call In German Assistance Means to Revive Old Menace

One resource remains—to call in the assistance of Germany—and Winston Churchill has already hinted at his availing himself of that most dangerous expedient. But if Germany is asked to assist Poland, the Baltic States or Finland against the aggression of Red Russia, she will insist on being allowed to arm and raise an army again, and armed and with her troops at Warsaw, Narva, Viborg and perhaps at Petrograd she will have all the cards in her hands and be in a stronger position than she was before the great war.

British experiences in Egypt, Austrian experiences in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and American experience in the Philippines show how difficult it is, even with the best intentions in the world, to withdraw an army of occupation. The Baltic States and the inaccessible Polish and Ukrainian lands will become fastnesses wherein Prussia will breed a new menace to western Europe. How can England and France ever send armies into these remote regions, especially when—and that day must come some time—they have withdrawn their troops of occupation in Germany itself, reduced their own armies and set themselves to the task of paying their bills? These complications may not come for fifty years, but what is fifty years in the life of a nation? Germany was exactly fifty years leading up to this great war.

And if Russia has in the meantime become monarchistic or established some republican system things will be no better, for a White Russia will resent the independence of her border States still more than Red Russia does, and Germany will be her willing ally in any attack on that independence. And in that case the Western Powers will find it more difficult than ever to intervene. What could they do against a united Germany and Russia? Occupation of the Rhine province would only drive Germany further eastward, make her more inaccessible and prepare a Russo-German amalgam which would con

stitute the most formidable explosive man kind ever invented.

And it would be well to remember that whatever kind of government Russia gets she will be anti-Ally. The White Russians now hate England and France with as much intensity as the Reds themselves and would be more likely to join hands with Germany than with Germany's conquerors. Moreover, they will be more likely to violate the independence of the border States than Lenin and Trotsky.

I have talked during the last two years to thousands of Russian Liberals, and I never met one of them who was willing to acknowledge the independence of the border States. Admiral Kolchak had no intention of doing so, and if he had entered Moscow in triumph, instead of dying miserably in Siberia, he would have accorded them no more than a limited measure of autonomy. In September, 1919, I discussed this point with M. Klawns, one of the Admiral's principal advisers, at Omsk, and that gentleman, who belonged to the Kadet party and who certainly spoke on this occasion for the Supreme Ruler, rejected with indignation the idea of granting independence to the Finns, Esthonians, Letts and Lithuanians. As for Poland, he was willing to concede it independence, but its frontiers, he said, must be drawn by the Russians and Poles themselves, without any interference from outside—which might very well mean that Poland would be restricted to those Polish lands which have been under Austrian and German rule, and that Russian Poland would revert to Russia.

He did not conceal his conviction that Poland could not exist as an independent State and that she had not got within her element necessary for building up and the maintenance of a separate nation.

Attributes Poland's Downfall To Operation of Natural Causes

"She is a purely artificial production," he said, "and cannot possibly last. A great deal of poetry has been written and a great deal of sentiment has been wasted on the subject of her downfall, but that downfall was due not to the criminal cupidity of neighboring empires or to the reckless ambition of despots, but to the operation of natural causes and to the inevitable development of historical processes. Frederick the Great cannot be blamed and Catherine the Great cannot be blamed, for it is a question of forces and of conditions, not of men. You might as well blame the president of a great American trust or railway system for the disappearing of the little industries before the growth of his mighty organization. Those industries were not suited for the changed conditions, and nothing could keep them alive—least of all the president, who could no more control the advance of his giant engine than a constitutional king can control the growth of the peoples he nominally rules."

"The natural causes which lead to the disappearance of a nation are economic as well as political, internal as well as external. They correspond to the natural causes which lead to the death of an animal or a plant. In the case of Poland the economic factors operate far more powerfully to-day than they did two hundred years ago, and the political causes will operate more powerfully than ever to-morrow, when Germany and Russia are again strong and when, under the new and trying conditions of modern

statesmanship, Poland will be handicapped to a greater extent than ever by that incurable defect in her national mentality which contributed to her downfall once and will contribute to it again.

"Imperial races have a collective mentality which destined them for empire. The Romans had it to a supreme degree. The British have it, the Germans have it, the Americans have it. The Irish and the Poles lack it, though they have other very high mental gifts; and to make either of these peoples independent is to constitute, out of sentiment, an artificial state which cannot possibly stand. Before the war Poland got all her raw material from Russia and all her capital from Germany; yet, filled with immeasurable pride, she is quite certain to antagonize both Russia and Germany, without whom she cannot exist. We divided up Poland thrice and there is nothing in the world to prevent us partitioning her a fourth time."

Theory of the Superstate Foremost With White Russians

M. Klawns here spoke not only for Kolchak but also for Denikin, Wrangel, Yudenich and all the White Russians; and, holding as they do the same theory of the superstate as a gigantic engine without a soul, many of the Bolshevik leaders take the same views. As regards the Baltic republics, M. Klawns was equally merciless.

"Russia cannot," he said, "give any of them complete independence any more than England can give complete independence to Ireland. We bear no ill will to them, but nature has unfortunately placed them in our way to the open sea, just as she placed Ireland in a geographical position which would make the complete independence of that country absolutely fatal to England. If they were situated on our Chinese frontier their independence would not matter a straw to us. Situated as they are, it would strangle us, and a nation of 125 millions cannot allow itself to be strangled thus."

"We are willing to grant them the fullest measure of autonomy, but independence—never! And even if we did grant them full independence they could never retain it, but would inevitably be swept into the orbit of Germany, a nation which is, unfortunately, very far from having been finally disposed of. They are too small to stand alone with their couple of million inhabitants each, their mutual jealousies and their large martial and well organized German minorities. "As for Finland, she also, with her small population of Finns and her large Swedish minority, cannot possibly stand by herself, and must inevitably fall into the orbit of Sweden, and therefore of Germany, for Sweden is pro-German. This would mean that the Baltic would become a German lake and that the Berlin Government would be stronger than it was in 1914. It must be remembered, too, that Finland absolutely controls the entrance to Petrograd; her frontier reaches to within some twenty miles of the Russian capital."

I do not subscribe to the above views, for Finland has as much right to be independent as Denmark, whose people are far closer racially to the Germans than the Finns are to the Russians. I only give these views at length in order to place on record the official White Russian attitude.

The idea of a small and peaceful people like the Finns blocking the entrance to Petrograd is absurd. The Finns are not going to spend their money constructing fleets and building great naval bases in order to menace any of their neighbors. The Government at Helsingfors recognizes the necessity for Russia having free access to the Baltic, and some of the highest officials of that Government have told me that once Lenin and Trotsky have been replaced by sane statesmen Finland will offer Russia free transit across her territory to the Baltic and special facilities for trading with the outer world through one of her ports.

Anti-Bolshevik Forum

It is not generally known that the Knights of Columbus in their jealousy of the doctrine of true Americanism have established a system of meeting and parrying the attacks on our Government and social systems by foreigners who may be and who may not be acknowledged Bolsheviks. The way this rebuttal testimony is given is mild but effective, for the K. of C. realizes that violent agitation is not effective, but simply leads to further violence. Therefore it follows these disturbers of the peace by peaceful speakers who present testimony in rebuttal of their arguments.

In the vanguard of the K. of C. forum squadron are Peter W. Collins, former labor leader and Government industrial expert; David W. Goldstein, ex-Socialist candidate for the Boston Mayoralty, and Dr. James J. Walsh of New York, a well known medical publicist and cultural authority. Each year they deliver from 200 to 300 lectures in definite areas assigned to them by the K. of C. The lecturers follow up Bolshevik agitators and in their audiences they find many of this sort, who try to heckle them with questions. The work of this forum is, therefore, seen to be constructive. Occasionally the lecturers of the forum will engage in debate with champions from the Bolshevik ranks. The result, left to the decision of the audience, has never been against the K. of C. speakers, for the reason that they deal in common sense.